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Ó Domhnaill Abú

O Donnell Clan Newsletter No. 15

Spring 1991

Bishop Edward O'Donnell of St. Louis, Missouri and Tom O'Neill, son of Tip O'Neill, former Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts cutting the tape at the official opening of the 'Flight of the Earls' Centre.

Flight of the Earls Centre is opened

AN old Battery built in 1810 which overlooks Lough Swilly at Rathmullan was opened as a Heritage Centre on Sunday last to commemorate the Flight of the Earls from Rathmullan in 1607.

The Flight of the Earls was not a disaster but a blessing for so many other parts of the world, an Irish American Bishop has claimed.

Bishop Edward O'Donnell, of St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., was speaking at the official opening of the Rathmullan Heritage Centre last Sunday. Accompanied by Mr. Tom O'Neill, son of famous American politician Tip O'Neill, and former Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts, His Lordship officially opened the new facility which is located at the fort-like building which dominates the beachfront of the town.

Bishop O'Donnell said he viewed the Flight of the Earls from a different perspective to the way very many Irish probably viewed the event.

The new Heritage Centre is open between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays and between 12.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is £1 per adult and 50p per child.

TRIUMPH

"I see them from the other context. The arrival of the Earls and the thousands and thousands whom they typify and who left this land for many different reasons have come to enrich so many parts of the world. Perhaps Ireland still suffers in some ways from the Flight of the Earls but at the same time it was a triumph."

Bishop O'Donnell said they dreamt of bettering themselves, of triumphing over adversity.

"Other Irish chose to stay and fight the same battle here. The Flight of the Earls has not been a disaster but a blessing for so many other parts of the world. We see O'Donnell and O'Neills leadership and the leadership of others like them in every country in the world not just in politics, not just in armies, but in priests and religious women, in scholars and artists, enriching the world wherever they've gone."

"It's good for you who have remained here, you who are still Irish, to hear that from a recipient. I think it's ironic that perhaps Irish-Americans might be more proud of our heritage than a lot of Irish-Irish because we see what it has meant; it's so blessed our country and the other nations of the world," he said.

NEWS

The Flight of the Earls Heritage Centre at Rathmullan was officially opened on Sunday 21st. Oct. 1990. The work was done by a local committee, grant aided by several organisations and the actual exhibits were designed by the Office of Public Works. We congratulate all concerned in doing something to promote tourism and at the same time place before the public details of that historic event which had such an effect on Ireland and particularly, on those involved in the actual 'Flight'.

Yet, there are a few minor criticisms I would like to make.

1. The life-size wax model in the above photo depicts Red Hugh O'Donnell, I am told. I find this misleading as Red Hugh did not sail from Rathmullan in 1607, (he died in Spain 1602), but his brother, Rory, did.

2. In the exhibition the date for Red Hugh's successful escape from Dublin Castle is given as Christmas 1591 when it should read 5th. Jan. 1592.

3. In the explanatory leaflet the date for the Battle of Kinsale is given as 24th. Sept. 1601, it should read 3rd. Jan. 1602. The English give the date as Christmas Day 1601 as they had not yet accepted the Gregorian calendar, it having been reformed by a pope.

Brian Friel's recently composed play, 'Making History' has also received some criticism from both O'Donnells and historians. Apart from the fact that Red Hugh is portrayed as an "ignorant country bumpkin", as someone remarked, he is called 'Earl of Tyrconnell' (which he never was) and in Act 2, Scene 1 we find him wandering about in the Sperrin Mountains after the defeat of Kinsale.

Another recent publication that deals quite alot with O'Donnell history is a beautiful book by Betty Mac Dermot, 'O Ruairc of Breifne'. Published by Drumlin Publications Ltd., Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim and costing £16, it is a well-documented history of the O'Rourke Clan of Breifne, Co. Leitrim. However, these two neighbouring clans seem to have had so many inter-relations that I would go so far as to say that a good quarter of the book recounts the history of our clan. Again, I would like to point out two minor observations.

1. On the genealogical chart on page 221 Red Hugh is shown as being married to Lady Rose, daughter of Hugh O'Neill. Although there was some mention of a bethrothal, there is no evidence of marriage having taken place. See Donegal Annual, 1986.

2. Elsewhere in the book there is mention of Red Hugh having been poisoned. Again, this was a rumour that has been continued down the years and for which there is no substantial evidence. See ODA No. 4.

According to the Donegal Democrat, Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary Robinson, the new President of Ireland has O'Donnell blood. Her mother was the late Tessie O'Donnell from Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, who married Dr. Aubry Bourke, Ballina, Co. Mayo. It was there that the President along with four others was reared.

Eamonn de Burca with an Taoiseach Charles Haughey at the launching of the Annals of the Four Masters.

Vincent O'Donnell (Ed.) with Anna Marie Fantasia.

Seventeen-year-old Anna Marie Fantasia, from Sacramento, California, paid a visit to Dónegal last summer doing research into the O'Donnell Clan for a book she is writing on Red Hugh.

Anna Marie, who has no Irish ancestors, first heard of Red Hugh when, as a fifteen-year-old, she was brought by her mother to see the movie "The Fighting Prince of Donegal". She was so intrigued by the exploits of the young hero, and knowing that the film was based on fact decided to learn more about the O'Donnells, and Red Hugh in particular.

Unfortunately, the amount of literature available on the subject was very limited - "and sadly much of what is written in the books I have been able to get in America is not very accurate". She made up her mind to travel to Donegal, the homeland of Red Hugh, and carry out an in-depth study of the history of the O'Donnells, and write a book "to set the record straight" - and, of course, make available in America "the real story of Red Hugh".

This has led her to Donegal where she met journalist Joe McGarrigle who introduced her to Vincent O'Donnell, Inver, and John O'Donnell, St. Johnston. They were very helpful to her and since then she has been corresponding with them. She was accompanied by her mother and grandmother. Anna is now looking forward to her next visit to Donegal and also hopes to be present at the proposed 1992 Clan Gathering to promote her book.

(From a report by Joe McGarrigle in the Donegal Times, Sept. '90.)

The Annals of the Four Masters.

On the 10th Oct. 1990 I had the great pleasure of being present in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin for the launching of the Annals of the Four Masters. To me it was an historic moment and I was proud to be, in a little way, associated with it. I could not but think of the mammoth task involved in collecting and compiling this historical record. That it was done inside four years (1632-36) and at a time when communications and travel were difficult, our country overrun by the Sasanach who despised everything Gaelic, and by four people, is almost unbelievable. To quote Fr. Paul Walsh, "Nothing of equal magnitude has been attempted since." Not alone was it an immense task but furthermore those historical records were so accurate that they form the basis of our Irish history till this day and it is rare to find any work of history dealing with pre16th cent. Ireland. without the letters 'A.F.M.' appearing among the list of sources.

But what were the 'Annals' and who were the 'Four Masters'?

The Annals.

The Four Masters collected from all over Ireland all the manuscripts then available that dealt with Irish history. For hundreds of years chronicilers had recorded the history of their Clan or district, e.g. 'The Annals of Ulster' by Mac Maghnusa, 'The Book of the Dun Cow', 'Annals of Lough Ce' and 'The Annals of Connacht'. One of their prime sources was 'Beatha Aoidh Ruaidh Ui Dhomhnaill' (Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell) written by Lughaidh O Cleirigh in 1616. This Lughaidh seems to have been an uncle of Michael, chief of the Four Masters. The historical contents of the above mentioned works along with many others have been embodied in the 'Annals' as have been the bardic poems and many genealogies of the great Gaelic families. Therefore the 'Annals' contain as much Irish history as was available then,all laid out in chronological order beginning forty days before the 'Flood' and ending in 1616.

The Four Masters.

Brother Michael O'Clery was born about 1590 and was a descendent of the illustrious O'Clery family who for 300 years were scholars and professors of history to the O'Donnells of Tyrconnell Chonaill. The O'Clery home was Kilbarron Castle a few miles N.W. of Ballyshannon. Br. Michael, or 'Tadhg an tSleibhe' as he was known, joined the Franciscan Order in Louvain in 1623. His superiors recognising his talents as an historian, sent him back to Ireland to collect what he could on the lives of Irish Saints and the history of his native land. To help him in this enormous task he chose three assistants; his own cousin Cucogry or Peregrine O'Clery, Fergus O'Mulconry and Peregrine O'Duigeanan. Conor O'Clery (Michael's brother) and Maurice O'Mulconry also assisted for a short while. They were first called 'The Four Masters' by Fr. John Colgan, another franciscan , writing about them in 1645.

For the Glory of God and the Honour of Ireland.

The 'Four Masters' fully realised the danger that threatened our old traditions, history, and in particular, our ancient manuscripts - "For as you well know, my friends, evil days have come upon us and upon our country; and if this work is not done now these old books of ours that contain the history of our country _ of its kings and its warriors, its saints and its scholars - may be lost to posterity, or at least may never be brought together again; and thus a great and irreparable evil would befall our native land." Their fears proved well founded for the destruction of books and records became widespread shortly after.

The Patron of the Annals.

The four historians needed patronage to finance their endeavour and enable them to support their families while engaged in their work. Br. Michael says:

"The good brothers of this convent, poor as they are themselves, have still undertaken to provide us with food and attendance. There is, alas! no O'Donnell now in Donegal to be our patron and protector; but, as you know, the noble Fergal O'Gara has promised to give you, my friends, a recompense for your labours that will help to maintain your families at home." The 'Annals' are dedicated to Fergal O'Gara, Chief of Coolavin, Co. Sligo who also received one of the two autographed copies made, the other naturally, went to the Fransiscans in Louvain.

First Translation and Publishing.

John O'Donovan, a great Gaelic scholar and a man steeped in Ireland's history (having spent years helping with the ordanance survey of the country), took particular interest in these manuscripts and in what they contained. From 1847 till 1851 he devoted his time to their translation and in 1851 there appeared the first published edition with Irish and English translation on facing pages. But the crowning achievement of O'Donovan's work was the copious historical, topographical and genealogical material in the footnotes which are a mine of information.

Third and Latest Edition.

This edition is unique as it incorporates material which was not included by O'Donovan. Kenneth Nicholls includes notes for the years 1334-1416 from Roderick O'Flaherty's transcript from the lost Annals of Lecan.

Where Written?

The following declaration appears in the original manuscript;

"On the 22nd. January, 1632, this work was undertaken in the Convent of Donegal, and was finished in the same convent on the 10th. of August, 1636.

I am thine most affectionately,
Brother Miahael O'Clery."

But what does Br. Michael mean by the 'Convent of Donegal'? As we know, the monastery or abbey of Donegal had been destroyed in 1601 and so was uninhabitable at the time and so the term would seem to imply 'The Fransiscan community of Donegal' regardless of place of residence. Tradition has it that the same community spent some time on their keep about the hills and hinterland of Donegal Town. It is also a well-known fact that the Fransiscans had a House at the Drowes river and indeed Br. Michael gives the Drowes as his address on several occasions in his manuscripts. The Drowes flows from Lough Melvin to the sea at Bundoran and forms the boundry between Cos. Leitrim and Donegal. Indeed, he puts it quite plainly when he says;

"Acc Drobhas i conveint brathar Duin na nGall" (at Drowes, in the convent of the friars of Donegal).

Conclusion.

This, the third edition, dedicated to An Cairdineal Tomas O

Fiaich, has been published by Eamonn de Burca of 27 Priory Drive, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. They sell at the very reasonable price of £350. Already half of the 1,000 sets printed are sold and no wonder when you consider the value for money. The present edition consists of 7 volumes, 6 of text and one of indices (people and places). Each volume contains approx. 600 pages beautifully printed and bound. Apart from the history of wars, kings, chieftains etc. they often mention such things as plagues, weather conditions, comets and other strange phenomena. In my oppinion, no library is complete without a set. I congratulate Eamonn on this great task and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Four meek men around the cresset,
With the scrolls of other days;
Four unwearied scribes who treasure
Every word and every line.
Not for fame or not for fortune,
Do these eager penmen dream.

Oh! that we who now inherit
All their trust, with half their toil,
Were but fit to trace their footsteps
Through the Annals of the Isle;
Oh! that the bright Angel, Duty,
Guardian of our tasks might be,
Teach us as she taught our Masters,
In that Abbey by the sea,
Faithful, grateful, just to be!
-(T.D. McGee).

Red Hugh's first Escape.

From the Annal of the Four masters, winter 1590. 400 years ago.

"Hugh Roe O'Donnell had now been in captivity in Dublin for the space of three years and three months. It was a cause for great distress of mind to him to be thus imprisoned; yet it was not for his own sake that he grieved, but for the sake of his country, his land, his friends, and kinsmen, who were in bondage throughout Ireland. He was constantly revolving in his mind the manner in which he might make his escape. This was not an easy matter for him, for he was confined in a closely-secured apartment every night in the castle until sunrise next day. This castle was surrounded by a wide and very deep ditch, full of water, across which was a wooden bridge, directly opposite the door of the fortress; and within and without the door were stationed a stern party of Englishmen, closely guarding it, so that none might pass in or out without examination. There is, however, no guard whose vigilance may not some time or other be baffled. At the very end of winter, as Hugh and a party of his companions were together, in the beginning of the night, they took with them a very long rope to a window which was near them, and by means of the rope they let themselves down, and alighted upon the bridge that was outside the door of the fortress. There was a thick iron chain fastened to this door, by which one closed it when required; through this chain they drove a strong handful of a piece of timber, and thus fastened the door on the outside, so that they could not be immediately pursued from the fortress. There was a youth of Hugh's faithful people outside awaiting their escape, and he met them on coming out, with two well-tempered swords concealed under his garments; these he gave into the hands of Hugh, who presented one of them to a certain renowned warrior of Leinster, Art Kavanagh by name, who was a champion in battle, and a commander in conflict.

As for the guards, they did not perceive the escape for some time; but when they took notice of it they advanced immediately to the door of the castle, for they thought that they should instantly catch them. Upon coming to the gate, they could not open it; whereupon they called over to them those who happened to be in the houses on the other side of the street, opposite the door of the castle. When these came at the call, and took the piece of timber out of the chain, and threw open the door for the people in the castle, who then set out, with a great number of the citizens, in pursuit of the youths who had escaped from them; but this was fruitless, for the fugitives had passed beyond the walls of the city before they were missed, for the gates of the regal city had been wide open at the time; and they pursued their way across the face of the mountain which lay before them, namely, Sliabh Ruadh, being afraid to venture at all upon the public road, and never halted in their course until after a fatiguing journey and travelling, until they had crossed the Red mountain aforesaid. When, weary and fatigued, they entered a thick wood which lay in their way, where they remained until morning. They then attempted to depart, for they did not deem it safe to remain in the wood, for fear of being pursued; but Hugh was not able to keep pace with his companions, for his white-skinned thin feet had been pierced by the furze of the mountain, for his shoes had fallen off, their seams having been loosened by the wet, which they did not till then receive. It was great grief to his companions that they could not bring him any further; and so they bade him farewell, and left him their blessing.

He sent his servant to a certain gentleman of the noble tribes of the province of Leinster, who lived in a castle in the neighbourhood, to know whether he could afford them shelter or protection. His name was Felim O'Toole, and he was previously a friend to Hugh, as he thought, for he had gone to visit him on one occasion in his prison in Dublin, when they formed a mutual friendship with each other. The messenger proceeded to the place where Felim was, and stated to him the embassy on which he came. Felim was glad at his arrival, and promised that he would do all the good he could for Hugh; but his friends and kindred did not allow him to conceal him, for fear of the English government. These learned that he was in the wood, as we have said, and they went in search of him, and dispersed with their troops to track him. When it was clear to Felim that Hugh would be discovered, he and his kinsmen resolved to seize upon him themselves, and bring him back to the Council in the city. This was accordingly done. When Hugh arrived in Dublin, the Council were rejoiced at his return to them; for they made nothing or light of all the other prisoners and hostages that had escaped from them. He was again put into the same prison, and iron fetters were put upon him as tightly as possible; and they watched and guarded him as well as they could. His escape, thus attempted, and his recapture, became known throughout the land of Ireland, at which tidings a great gloom came over the Irish people."

Hugh O'Donnell of Larkfield.

The Plantation of Ulster and the Cromwellian Settlement marked the dispersal of the surviving O'Donnells of Tyrconnell. Rory of Lifford, grandson of Niall Garbh O'Donnell who was committed to the Tower of London in 1609, for "complicity in O'Dogherty's rebellion" of the previous year, and who died in 1621, removed to Mayo with a large train of followers sometime prior to 1664. A kinsman of his, Connell O'Donnell who was married to Rory's daughter was more tenacious and succeeded in retaining a foothold in the home territory after the exodus to Connaught. The family were still reasonably affluent. Connell is recorded as Titulado of the district of Bellkergan, Altepast, Aghevay, Letterbricke, Ballibonibany and Bellibonitem, all in the civil parish of Stranorlane (Stranorlar) in the 1659 Census. His son, Hugh, married Flora Hamilton, daughter of John Hammilton of Killanure, Convoy, Co. Donegal, by whom he had three children. Following her death in 1716 he married Margaret, daughter of Hugh Montgomery, of Derrygonnelly, Co. Fermanagh, who presented him with a second family.

John O'Donovan tells us that Hugh left Donegal for Mullaghbane near the head of Lough Macnean, Co. Fermanagh, after the collapse of the Jacobite cause, and shortly afterwards settled at Larkfield, Manorhamiliton, Co. Leitrim. The dates of the second marriage and the taking up of his residence at both Mullaghbane and Larkfield are unknown. It should be remembered that the O'Donnells were no longer freeholders. Non-renewal of leases could have percipitated his move to Fermanagh. The fact that his second wife was from there suggests that he was already living at Mullaghbane much longer than recorded by O'Donovan. All would appear to have been going well until a Protestant 'discoverer', one Rowland Kane of Desertmartin, Co. Derry, availing of the penal enactment of 1709, filed a Bill of Discovery against him in the Court of Exechequer. The allegation was that Hugh, being a Catholic, had contravened the Law of obtaining a lease in excess of 31 years. The lease had been taken from John Cole of Florencecourt, Co. Fermanagh. It only needed the proving of the Bill for the property to pass to the 'discoverer.' Kane was so sure of his ground that before the result of the case was known he disposed of his interest in the claim to Hugh Montgomery of Derrygonnelly (Margaret's father) with the stipulation that the prosecution he initiated should be pursued. The Court's verdict has not been traced. Undoubtedly it was in the plaintiff's favour. The Kane/Montgomery deed is dated 27th April, 1742. From this it will be seen that Hugh O'Donnell's interest in the Fermanagh lands continued for more than 50 years after the Williamite victory of 1690.

There were only two Catholic families in the townland of Mullaghbane in 1957. Neither had any knowledge or tradition of the O'Donnell sojourn in the place.

Upon coming to Larkfield the O'Donnells became tenants on the Lane/Fox estate.

Hugh O'Donnell had a just pride in his name and race. He was a friend and patron of Seamus Maguidhir, an t-Athair Padraig O Coirnin and Fergal (or Padraig) Og Mac a Bhaird. The last two addressed eulogistic poems to him. He engaged Maguidhir, a noted scribe, to salvage the surviving family poems. Seamus applied himself diligently to the task, searching through old Irish manuscripts and creating an anthology now known as "Duanaire Ui Dhomhnaill" or "The Poem Book of the O'Donnells." The bulk of the work was completed towards the end of May 1727 - a few additions being made at a later date.

There are 113 poems in all. Of these 97 are addressed to various members of the O'Donnell family. One laments the death of Flora Hamilton in 1716. Another mourns the passing of Rory of Lifford's son, Col. Manus O'Donnell, of Newport, Co. Mayo, that occurred in 1736.

The manuscript is written in a clear hand on ruled paper. The scribe provides a preface and has set out Hugh's pedigree going back through seven generations to Manus O Domhnaill, 21st Chieftain (1537-63). The whole comprises an octavo volume, roughly bound in calf. Maguidhir has left it on record that he was handsomely rewarded for his labours.

It is not known when, or how, this priceless work passed out of the O'Donnell family. It was in the possession of Rev. Dr. Paul O'Brien, Professor of Irish at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, who loaned it to Edward O'Reilly, another noted scholar. Eugene O Curry had access to it in 1857

and appended some notes to the text. It figured as item No. 1438 in the Todd Sale Catalogue of 1869 and found its way into the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart. The National Library of Ireland had the good fortune to acquire it by purchase from the Phillipps Library, Cheltenham, in 1930/1.

Hugh, now resident in Larkfield, was looked upon as a person of status and learning. He was known locally as "Earl O'Donnell," an appelation that pleased him and which he strove jealously to maintain. The term had been applied by poets to his father's older brother and himself. Hugh was obsessed with being a lineal descendant of the Earl of Tyrconnell. Why he persisted in this absurdity, when it was clear from Maguidhir's pedigree in an "Duanaire" that his ancestor was An Calbhach (Chief 1563-6), the Earl's uncle and not the Earl himself, is difficult to understand.

Toirdealbhach O Cearbhallain, the famous harper, was a frequent visitor at Larkfield. Hugh was offended when he learned that "The Hawk of Ballyshannon," composed by Toirdealbhach, referred to a member of the Newport Branch and not to himself "as lineal descendant of the Earl of Tyrconnell." In consequence "the accustomed hospitalities of Larkfield were interdicted to the bard" until an apology was made.

This egoism could have stemmed from the family possessing the actual Patent of 1603/4 creating Rory O'Donnell Earl of Tyrconnell. While the Earldom had been forfeited by attainder the Patent relating to it most likely survived among the Larkfield O'Donnells. It is still in existence.

Richard Pococke, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, was much impressed by Hugh O'Donnell, whom he met at dinner at Col. Foliot's house in Ballyshannon on 26 July, 1752. The cleric records in his Journal: "they say (he) is the head of that (O'Donnell) family descended from the Earl of Tyrconnell and that he has only leases, yet he is the head of the Roman Catholics in this country, and has a great interest, is a sensible man and well vested in the Irish history, both written and traditional."

The Larkfield man's wide knowledge was appreciated by Charles O'Connor of Belangare when he sought his attestation of the genealogy of Count John O'Rourke that he had compiled. Hugh was pleased to oblige, dating his reply from Larkfield on 18th November, 1754, and signing it "O'DONNELL".

Ten days later he was dead.

The Franciscans were brought to Donegal by Nuala O'Brien, wife of Hugh Roe O'Donnell (Chief 1461-1505). Her sister, Margaret, invited the monks from there to Creevelea Abbey, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim. Maire, sister of Red Hugh (Chief 1592-1602), and wife of Sir Teige O'Rourke, presented a beautiful chalice to the new foundation for the good of her husband's soul. It is now in the Catholic Church, Butlerstown, Co. Cavan.

With this long and close association with the Franciscan Order it was natural that the O'Donnells should seek Creevelea, rather than Cloonlougher cemetry, in the parish of Kilargue, right beside Larkfield, as their place of interment. Indeed, their position would have entitled them to the greatest place of honour within the hallowed walls, but, as it was many years before the occasion arose, and as all the internal allocations had been taken up, they had to be content with an outside plot in the angle between the west side of the south trancept and the nave. It was here that Hugh was laid to rest. A large elevated, horizontal slab, bearing the O'Donnell Arms, Supporters, Coronet and Motto "In Hoc Signo Vinces," with the inscription:

Prey for the soul of
O'Donnell Hugh Who De
parted this life Novr. ye 28th
1754 aged 63 yrs.

marks his grave. It is known locally as "the Earl's Tombstone."

Hugh's first wife, Flora Hamilton, died 12 November 1716. His second lady, Margaret Montgomery, lived to be 110 years, dying in 1795.

Flora's children were: Connell (Karl), John and Susanna. Her brother, General Count Hamilton, of the Imperial Service, invited his two nephews to Vienna and placed them in the army of Austria, where distinguished careers awaited them. Susanna married Col. Edward Purcell who was serving in Austria.

Karl became Colonel Proprietor of his own regiment, to which he gave his name, in 1756. He rose to the rank of General, became Inspector-General of Cavalry, a Privy Councillor and Governor of Translyvania. He was conferred with the Grand Cross of the Military Order of Marie Therese for his bravery at the

Connal or Karl (122).

Battle of Torgau, 1761. He fought in eighteen battles, was wounded a number of times and died, unmarried, in Vienna on 26th March, 1771, at the early age of 56 years.

John commenced his service in 1736, to finally become a Lieutenant-General. He too saw much active service and won the small Cross of the Military Order of Marie Therese at the Battle of Maxen in 1759. He later became Governor of the Elizabeth Theresian Institute, Vienna, dying in that city on 12th March, 1784, aged 72 years. His only son, Hugh, a Major, was killed in action at the Battle of Neerwinden in 1793. He was unmarried.

Karl and John were subsequently joined by their step-brother, also John, and relatives from both Newport and Castlebar, until eventually nine Irish-born O'Donnells held commissions in the Austrian Service.

One was required to prove one's sixteen quarterings before being admitted to the Austrian Court. This presented a problem to the O'Donnells owing to the absence of native records. The difficulty was overcome by producing Rory O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell's Patent of 1603/4. It was accepted as proof of nobility and they were given the courtesy title of "Count." Several years were to pass before they were elevated to the Imperial Peerage. It came as a reward to Col. Maximilian Count O'Donell who, as aide-de-camp to the Emperor, saved His Majesty from assassination in 1853.

Hugh and Margaret Montgomery's children were: Con of Larkfield (from whom Fr. Hugh O'Donel, O.F.M., the present Chief of the Name is descended); John who joined his step-brothers in Vienna and died there young and unmarried; and two daughters, Grace and Kate that married in Co. Fermanagh.

I visited Creevelea Abbey in April 1968 and was both shocked and grieved to find that masonry supporting the "Earl's Tombstone" had crumbled, leaving the slab lop-sided. Furthermore, the adjoining upright marble monument commemorating later O'Donnells had fallen from its limestone base and lies prone. Its inscription cannot now be read. A small cross that adorned the top is broken off and missing.

A headstone to Moneyduff O'Donnells is next to the Larkfield plot. The families are not related.

Rupert S. O Cochlain (R.I.P.).

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Editor's note - the above article with a complete list of sources was first published in the Donegal Annual of 1985.

As most of the persons mentioned above have also been mentioned in past issues of this Newsletter I give here their reference numbers:
Rory of Lifford (22); Nial Garbh (16); Connell (24) = Grace (26a); Hugh of Larkfield (27); Hugh's first family, Connal (122), John (122a) and Susanna (122b); their step-brother was John (30a); John (122a) had a son Hugh (123); Col. Maxmilian (59); Hugh's (27) second family, Conn (30), John (30a), Grace (30b) and Kate (30c).

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